

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

March 9, 2009

CALL TO ORDER:

Kathleen Eriksen, Chairperson called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Members Present: Kathleen Eriksen Doug Sofia
Glen Harris Laurie Sullivan
Jan Hatch Kurt Thornton
Susan Baldwin (Commission Liaison)

Staff Present: Glenn Perian, Senior Planner, Planning & Community Development
Susan Bedsole, Director Licensing & Compliance
Kim Tuck, Chief Building Official, Inspections
Leona Parrish, Administrative Assistant, Planning

ADDITIONS / DELETIONS TO AGENDA: Move Old Business on agenda to be following New Business.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:

Motion was made by Mr. Kurt Thornton to approve the minutes from February 9, 2009 meeting;
Seconded by Mr. Doug Sofia, all in favor minutes approved as presented.

CORRESPONDENCE: None

NEW BUSINESS:

70 W. Michigan Avenue

Mr. Glenn Perian stated this property had previously been approved for a front canopy, which was never done and the owner has now decided to change the design.

Mr. Dan Paul, Ms. Tracy VanDyke and Mr. Andy Wenzel were present on behalf of property owner. Mr. Paul stated the previously approved canopy was not installed and they owner now want to change the design as shown (New York) design with the same era. Said the lighting would be shining downward with no neon lights going around.

Ms. Sullivan asked if the name would be on it as shown in the photo. Mr. Dan Paul stated no, it will be bland.

Ms. Kathleen Eriksen said if we do not have the new design available, could they approve the conception plans.

MOTION: MADE BY MS. KATHLEEN ERIKSEN TO TABLE THE APPROVAL OF THE CANOPY UNTIL THE ACTUAL PLANS ARE SUBMITTED FOR REVIEW FOR

PROPERTY LOCATED AT 70 W. MICHIGAN AVENUE; SUPPORTED BY MR. KURT THORNTON.

ALL IN FAVOR, NONE OPPOSED MOTION PASSED TO TABLE.

Mr. Glen Harris asked why they did not do the canopy with the first plans approved. Mr. Dan Paul stated the owner wanted to change the design with the banding going around as it was done in the 50's.

Mr. Glen Harris asked why add something bulky to a building that originally did not have any canopy.

Commissioner Susan Baldwin said she felt the new design was appropriate for the building style.

Ms. Laurie Sullivan said she felt it did not go with the building as it is "art deco business style".

Mr. Glen Harris said they should add something to complement the building as it had not originally had a canopy, instead of something so outstanding.

Mr. Andy Wenzel said they could come back with a final rendering; asked if they still have the option for the already approved canopy. Mr. Perian stated, yes.

141-143 W. Emmett Street: Mr. Glenn Perian read the report stating this was a vacant building that the Family Health Center wanted to demolish in order to build a new Dental Clinic addition to their existing facility. He noted it had previously been approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Dr. A.J. Jones was present and spoke on behalf of the Family Health Center. He talked about the New Dental Clinic and how it would balance their building with the Women's Center and would also add more medical suites. Said the color would match the original structure and material, said Mr. John Rambo, Architect was present for any questions.

Mr. Glen Harris asked if this area was to be used for parking. Answer: Yes

MOTION: MADE BY MR. GLEN HARRIS TO APPROVE THE DEMOLISHION OF BUILDING LOCATED AT 141-143 W. EMMETT STREET AS SUBMITTED; SUPPORTED BY MS. LORI SULLIVAN.

ALL IN FAVOR, NONE OPPOSED MOTION PASSED TO APPROVE.

Mr. Kurt Thornton asked what would be done with the signs on the building. Dr. A.J. Jones stated he would keep those for their historical value.

181 W. Emmett Street: Mr. Glenn Perian stated this is an application requesting approval of a new addition to the Family Health Center for a Dental Clinic. Maps were provided of the new construction and it was noted that the new addition would be constructed of the same material as the Health Center.

Dr. A.J. Jones stated with the addition they plan on adding a conference center with memorabilia that Mr. Duff Stoltz will be providing historic artifacts for the conference center reflecting Adventist History.

MOTION: MADE BY MR. KURT THORNTON TO APPROVE THE APPLICATION FOR THE NEW DENTAL CLINIC ADDITION FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 181 W. EMMETT STREET; SUPPORTED BY MR. DOUG SOFIA.

ALL IN FAVOR, NONE OPPOSED MOTION PASSED TO APPROVE.

OLD BUSINESS: *(Petitions Tabled from February 9, 2009 HDC Meeting)*

Ms. Susan Bedsole, Director of Licensing & Compliance was present to explain the program for the Grants. She handed out a mapping of vacant buildings identified within the City of Battle Creek, and explained the purpose of vacant and abandoned houses as being their focus and identify those that needed to be demolished; (Category 1) are non-repairable and (Category 2) are those that can be repaired and rehabbed. Noted those that are vacant and foreclosed were removed from the map as they are hoping they would be purchased.

Ms. Bedsole said they have 1.4 million for demolitions and noted the City of Battle Creek has too much housing stock for its population. Five-hundred thousand dollars will do 6-8 houses within the city, and that NIBC will identify some of those. It is an average of 10,000 dollars for each demo, 150 are within the circle in the center of the city which is the target area, and they want to do as many as possible. Said the citizens of Battle Creek want more green-space and will use some of the properties for demolition to allow for that green-space. She noted that those that come before them are the only ones within a Historic District.

Ms. Laurie Sullivan asked if the property is not owned by the city; do they place a lien against those properties. Ms. Bedsole stated, yes the lien monies are then used to demolish other properties. Said the properties usually revert back for taxes.

Ms. Sullivan asked if the lien stayed with the property. Ms. Bedsole stated, yes they can take the owner to court to recover the money if needed.

Mr. Glen Harris asked if the foundations were removed when a structure was demolished. Mr. Kim Tuck stated, yes it is required that the City remove the foundations.

Mr. Harris asked who will then take care of the many vacant lots. Ms. Bedsole stated the grass cannot exceed 9" and the City can cut the lots, but there is a fee and would be charged to the owner if they do not maintain the property. She stated the city does not like to demo, but some of these homes are not in good shape and should be removed to keep from being rented and continue to be not in compliance.

Mr. Glenn Perian stated that is why these properties are being presented to the Historic District Commission.

Ms. Susan Bedsole stated they have already recognized those to be demolished and are now looking outside of the circle for other properties.

Ms. Sullivan asked if the contractor can off-set their fee by salvaging. Mr. Kim Tuck stated the contractor can off-set their cost and can bid lower because of the salvaging available to them. Ms. Bedsole stated they would like to have Habitat to be able to salvage first, said the City Attorney's office is looking into this possibility.

Ms. Kathleen Eriksen asked Ms. Susan Bedsole if they had made all of their selections, as she was aware of a couple that the property owner wanted to demolish. Ms. Bedsole said for her to e-mail the information regarding those properties to her for review.

Ms. Eriksen asked if the rehab properties have been identified. Ms. Bedsole stated there are so many that it was not a problem to identify. Dollars have to be committed within 15 months or it is lost. She said the City of Battle Creek has been the first to get their grant approved from the State of Michigan.

Ms. Sullivan stated where she lived previously the City purchased the lots and sold them.

It was decided to make a separate motion for each of the three properties tabled from February meeting:

92 W. MANCHESTER STREET

MOTION: MADE BY MR. GLEN HARRIS TO APPROVE THE DEMOLISHION OF 92 W. MANCHESTER ST. AS SUBMITTED; SUPPORTED BY MR. DOUG SOFIA.

ALL IN FAVOR, NONE OPPOSED MOTION PASSED TO APPROVE.

161 OAKLAWN AVENUE

MOTION: MADE BY MR. DOUG SOFIA TO APPROVE THE DEMOLISHION OF 161 OAKLAWN AVENUE AS SUBMITTED; SUPPORTED BY MS. JAN HATCH.

FIVE IN FAVOR (MR. HARRIS, MR. THORNTON, MS. ERIKSEN, MR. SOFIA, AND MS. HATCH; ONE OPPOSED (MS. SULLIVAN) MOTION PASSED TO APPROVE.

225 N. WASHINGTON AVENUE

MOTION: MADE BY MR. KURT THORNTON TO APPROVE THE DEMOLISHION OF 225 N. WASHINGTON AVENUE AS SUBMITTED; SUPPORTED BY MR. DOUG SOFIA.

ALL IN FAVOR, NONE OPPOSED MOTION PASSED TO APPROVE.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS AND STAFF:

Mr. Glenn Perian noted the flyer included in their packet regarding Open House Invitation for the Planning and Community Development departments move to the 2nd Floor at Commerce Pointe.

Mr. Kurt Thornton provided information regarding the 29th Annual State Preservation Conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan on March 16, 2009.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion made by Ms. Laurie Sullivan to adjourn this meeting; all in favor none opposed. Meeting was adjourned at 4:48 p.m.

Submitted by: Leona A. Parrish, Administrative Assistant, Planning Department